



May 3, 2012

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
B-351 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers:

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), the oldest and largest national anti-domestic violence advocacy organization that serves more than 1.3 million domestic violence victims in more than 2,000 shelter programs nationwide, expresses its strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

H.R. 4970 is an anti-victim bill that promotes a racist, elitist and homophobic agenda. H.R. 4970 weakens vital improvements contained in the recently passed Senate VAWA bill (S. 1925), including provisions designed to increase the safety of Native women and the needs of the LGBT community. In addition, H.R. 4970 includes damaging provisions that roll back years of progress to protect the safety of immigrant victims. Consequently, H.R. 4970 will create obstacles for immigrant victims seeking to report crimes, increase danger for immigrant victims by eliminating important confidentiality protections, and will undermine effective anti-fraud protections. While there are portions of H.R. 4970 that mirror the bipartisan Senate bill and are supported by the field, we remain opposed to the bill.

For the past 18 years, VAWA and its subsequent reauthorizations has served as a beacon of hope for victims of domestic and sexual violence. VAWA is one of the few policies unfettered by partisanship and divided government. Now is not the time to abandon victims and subject them to re-victimization by making them war casualties. The House has the opportunity to pass a victim-centered VAWA reauthorization bill that will allocate sufficient resources to hold perpetrators accountable and expand services and protections to all victims.

We strongly oppose H.R. 4970 and urge all members of the Judiciary Committee to oppose it. We support a bill that is closer to H.R. 4271 with improvements, including those provisions in the bipartisan Senate bill that protects Tribal victims, immigrant victims, LGBTQ victims and other marginalized communities. Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me or Tralonne Shorter, Public Policy Advisor for NCADV at (202) 744-8455 if you have any questions or want additional information.

Sincerely,

Rita Smith
Executive Director

cc: House Judiciary Committee Members